

stones may well be 'original' Roman surfacing. The top of this slope affords long distance views over Radstock, Frome Hill and further afield over Ammerdown. The tower on the horizon is the 'Jolliffe monument', erected by the Jolliffe family in 1850 in memory of their father who created Ammerdown Park and House in 1793. This tower is approximately 150' high and had a large glass viewing dome at the top which was severely damaged and removed after the 1987 gales.

Further along on the right the Church tower of the redundant Clandown Church is visible. The area surrounding it and now covered in pine trees is the site of Clandown Colliery, worked from 1790-1924. Further along again the volcano type hill on the right is the coal waste tip of 'Old Mills' Colliery. Before they were planted with trees, all of Radstock's many batches would have looked like this and the landscape would have been very different from today.

Continue along the track, down the field, across the Greenway track and over the Radstock Road.

7 Heading up past Fosseway Cottages, the Pine trees here are growing on the waste tips of the Wellsway colliery which is at the top of this trackway. At the top of the track, before reaching Wells Road, the Old Engine House of Wellsway colliery can be seen. This pit was in use from 1829 to 1897, and tragedy struck here in 1839 when 12 miners lost their lives after the pit rope was slashed (some say maliciously) sending the men crashing to the bottom of the shaft. The most interesting survival here is the stables, with low arched entrances, that housed the pit ponies of Wellsway colliery. These are thought to be the only surviving examples in the country.

Turn left along the main Wells Road.

8 On the right are house terraces built in 1913 for Radstock Urban Council for social housing. These mimic the style of the much older miners housing on the left, built for the Waldegraves in the early 1800's. Some very good examples of early cottages can be found, still with slate roofs and sash windows, although many have been altered. The iron railings that surround Norton Radstock College once enclosed the grounds of South Hill House

(now demolished). This was the home of James McMurtrie, Mines and Estate Manager for Countess Waldegrave. McMurtrie's management had a huge influence over the coalfield, and he doubled the profit's of collieries under his control.

Turn left into Welton Road

9 The Rookery on the left is an interesting example of Victorian Gothick style, with exaggerated steep roof gables. Welton Road contains more miners' cottages and the shop of Brixkeys, formerly 'Mitchards' Butchers shop in the 1920's. The archway to the right of the shop led to the back yard where animals were slaughtered. There were also two pubs here with a Quoits Bed to the rear.

Continue down the road and take the pavement on the right at the road junction. Cross over the Somervale Road into the Five Arches Park.

10 The Five Arches were constructed in 1873 to carry the Somerset & Dorset Railway over the top of the Great Western Railway. You can now take the 'Greenway Track', which follows the path of the Great Western Railway back into Radstock, or climb the stairs up and follow the higher Somerset and Dorset Railway track.

11 The 'sunken cottage' seen at the end of the track is the former Wharfinger's Cottage of the Canal Keeper to the Somerset Coal Canal. The wharf that was here was the end of the canal that ran through to Midford in the 1790's. The Somerset and Dorset Railway was built later on the line of the infilled canal.



Radstock
Museum

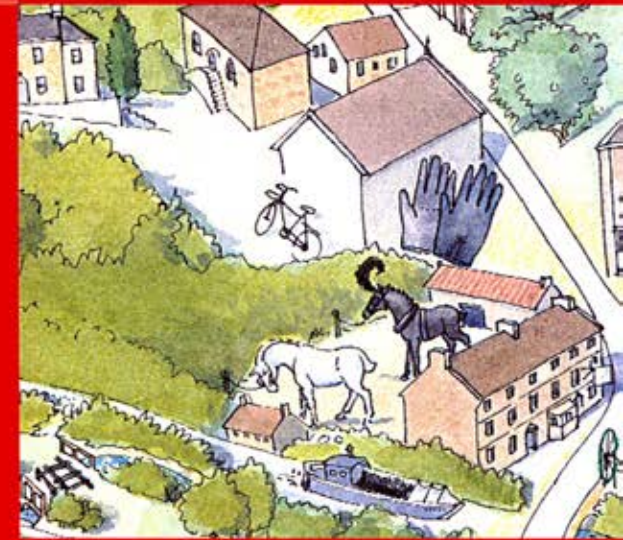


Norton Radstock
Town Council



Red Route

Radstock Fosseway Walk



Demanding walk. Approximately 2 and a half miles, taking around 2 hours, sometimes over steep and rough surfaces. Stout footwear advised.

One of four walks exploring the built and natural heritage of Radstock

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Start from the Pit Wheel. Cross the road (with care) and turn up the hill past the Waldegrave Arms Hotel.

1 This imposing listed building was built in the early-mid nineteenth century as an hotel, on the site of a much earlier structure. It would have dominated the small village of Radstock at this time, and is named after the Waldegrave family, who were Lords of the Manor of Radstock since the Civil War and became owners of many local collieries. Stables to the rear were rented by the Mattick family who ran horse transport, which included hackney work and weddings and funerals, using appropriate black or white horses. Radstock's first horsedrawn Fire Engine was also kept here, funded by George Coombs the brewery owner in 1891. Later the same premises became Sam Gill's garage and Esso petrol station.

Fork left into Coombend.

2 Up to the right on the Bath Road is a three storey building with a shop frontage. Built in 1874 for Waldegrave estates, it was Radstock's first chemist shop, occupied by Mr Thompson. Further into Coombend on the left are two former shops with ground floors now converted to houses. These were the premises of Dando & Cooper, family draper and household furnishers. The adjoining three storey Fish and Chip shop was in 1931/32 the first Glove factory in Radstock, employing 10 people. Along again, the carpet warehouse building was built in 1816 as Radstock First Chapel, and extended (forward) in 1840 to provide a schoolroom. The First Chapel relocated in 1902 to new premises in Fortescue Road. The old chapel became an entertainment hall and the Palace Cinema, seating 450. Travelling road shows including magicians and Samson the Strongman played here. A surviving photo of one of Samson's acts shows him lying down with a motorcycle and rider (weighing 500lbs) riding over his throat to set a world record! The Palace closed in the 1960's and the building was used by Radstock Technical College.

The entrance next to this building leading to Hallmark scrapyards formerly led to Middle Pit. Opened in 1779, this pit once held the record for having the deepest shaft in the



Somerset Coalfield, with a depth of 1,791ft. in 1886. A full range of buildings including a 120ft high chimney, boiler house, winding engine house, offices, saw pit shed, carpenters shop, smith's shop and workers cottages stood on this site known as 'Ham'. The 1905 engine winding house of Middle Pit remains, as does the former Radstock Gasworks building, built by the Waldegrave Estates in 1858 and closed in 1954. The chimney base can also be seen on the left walking up the road.



3 Further along the road on the right is an impressive three storey house (number 8). Built around 1800, it is probably now one of the oldest houses in Radstock and undoubtedly one of the finest.

The 'Swimco' factory was formerly the building yard and workshops of the 'Fosters'. Dent Allcroft Glove manufacturers later rented buildings from the Foster family and employed up to 200 people from 1934 until closure in 1972.

4 Further up the road, beyond a bungalow on the left look for a farm gate leading to a steep track leading up a field. This leads to a small stone built hut, where powder for mining operations was stored. Because of its dangerous contents, the building stands in an isolated position and folklore says that in an explosion debris would not reach the manager's house at Middle Pit. The powder house is a listed building, and an increasingly rare example of its type.

On the right is a row of cottages standing well below the present road level. This is the original ground level and the road and many workshops stand on ground made up by colliery waste

5 The site of Old Pit, the first deep shaft mine in Radstock lies behind the Midsomer Engineering building. The pit was sunk in 1763 and worked until 1854. Very little remains to be seen, only the tree covered spoil heap (or 'batch') is visible.

The name of Old Pit lives on in the former miners' housing in Old Pit Terrace. Of interest in all these miners' cottages are the backyards, where stone outbuildings housed the coal store and privy. The tin bath hung on a nail outside, and some buildings housed coal fired coppers for boiling water on wash days or even for cooking Christmas puddings!

Coombend has an interesting character. Some historic gems survive amongst the mixed collection of miscellaneous industrial units. The area has witnessed the rise and fall of coal mining, glove making and metal working industries, and is now ripe for a further phase of regeneration.

Proceed down the hill to the left to the valley bottom.

6 Radstock was founded on communication routes, and this continues today with the car traffic which fills the centre. The steep track here is the original Roman Fosseway, a Roman 'motorway' constructed around AD 60 stretching from Exeter to Humberside. Soon after the Roman invasion of AD 43, this line represented the furthest extent of the Roman Empire. Garrisons were built, later to be replaced by the road. Some of the large



Look out for these signs along your walk

Start point and finish point:
Pit wheel, adjacent to Radstock Museum, Waterloo Road.

For more information on local history, visit Radstock Museum to browse the bookshop or visit the teasop. The Museum is open Tuesday to Friday, Sunday and Bank Holiday Monday 2.00-5.00. Saturday 11.00-5.00. Closed December - January.

Coal has been mined in this locality since Roman times, but the industrialisation of production in 1763 transformed Radstock from a small village into a major mining centre.

At the close of the eighteenth century, the pits employed some 1500 men and boys, and the associated transport links of first canal and then railway dominated the town. The last pit closed in 1973, leaving the town with a unique character and heritage. Radstock is today acknowledged as being one of the best preserved mining towns in England.

